United Nations

Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General deplores reports of resumed shelling of Dubrovnik and areas near Osijek; calls for "scrupulous" observance of Geneva Agreements of 23 November on Yugoslav cease-fire.

- Secretary-General recommends to Security Council that it extend mandate of United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) for another six months, until 15 May 1992.

- Secretary-General says time is "fast approaching" for negotiations between El Salvador Government and FMLN to move to New York.

- Secretary-General makes statement at ceremony at Headquarters launching "Earth Pledge" to make planet secure and hospitable for all generations.

- Global moratorium on all large-scale drift-net fishing recommended in Economic and Financial Committee draft for approval by General Assembly.

- General Assembly calls for strengthened cooperation with League of Arab States on Middle East concerns.

- Proposed $6.6 million increase for United Nations peace-making efforts in Afghanistan among drafts approved by Administrative and Budgetary Committee.

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar said today through his Spokesman that he was disturbed to learn from his Personal Envoy, Cyrus Vance, of the resumed shelling of Dubrovnik and neighbouring areas. He said that "at this critical moment", it was imperative that the Geneva Agreements of 23 November be scrupulously observed by the parties in Yugoslavia and that no actions be taken outside that country that could further complicate the situation and jeopardize the efforts currently underway.

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The continued presence of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) remains indispensable to achieve the objectives set by the Security Council, according to Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar. He has therefore recommended, in a report to the Council dated 30 November, that it extend the mandate of the Force for a further six-month period, until 15 May 1992.

In his report, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar expresses the view that the two communities -- the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot -- could make "better use" of UNFICYP's ability to promote and facilitate "greater contact" between them. It is the Force's mandate to promote a return to normal conditions in Cyprus -- an aspect which he says will receive "more emphasis in the future".

In making his recommendation, the Secretary-General stressed that UNFICYP is "facing a chronic and ever-deepening financial crisis", which, he said, "imposes a most unfair burden on the troop-contributing countries". He urged the Council to place UNFICYP on a "sound and secure financial footing".

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The Secretary-General's Spokesman said today in a statement issued at Headquarters, that Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar had met today with the Ambassadors of Colombia, Mexico, Spain and Venezuela -- the "Friends of the Secretary-General" -- and briefed them on progress in the talks on El Salvador currently underway in Mexico.

The Spokesman said the Secretary-General had been closely following negotiations between the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN), through his Personal Representative, Alvaro de Soto, and that he continued to attach a high priority to the resolution of the conflict in El Salvador.

It was the judgement of the Secretary-General, the Spokesman said, based on the reports and recommendations of his Representative, that the negotiations should move to New York, hopefully next week, so that the Secretary-General could intervene personally should the need arise, and in order to facilitate the participation of Under-Secretary-General Marrack Goulding in regard to arrangements for verification of the cease-fire.

The Secretary-General called upon the negotiators to intensify their efforts so that when the talks move to New York, the issues shall have been substantially narrowed to a point where final decisions could be expeditiously adopted.

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The Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Maurice Strong, today launched Earth Pledge -- an urgent call for individual as well as united action to save Planet Earth.

At a ceremony in the Trusteeship Council Chamber, Mr. Strong said the Pledge was a simple instrument to engage people in the act of commitment. An "Earth Summit Committee to Promote the Pledge" had been established as a forerunner to the UNCED conference scheduled for June in Brazil. The Committee's mission would be to promote the Pledge, as well as to bring public attention to the Rio Conference.

In his statement at the ceremony, Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar said the 1992 Conference would provide a crucial test of the political will not only to accept but to foster and manage the changes needed in the economic and environmental sphere. By signing the Earth Pledge, he said, people all over the world would affirm their personal dedication to making the planet a better one.

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A global moratorium on all large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing on the high seas, to be achieved by 31 December 1992, was recommended to the General Assembly this morning by the Second Committee (Economic and Financial).

The recommendation was contained in a draft text, approved without a vote, which would have the Assembly call on the international community, beginning on 1 January, to reduce fishing efforts in existing large-scale pelagic high seas drift-net fisheries, so as to achieve, after six months, a 50 per cent reduction in fishing efforts and the global moratorium by the end of next year.

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The General Assembly has requested the Secretary-General to strengthen cooperation with the League of Arab States in order to implement United Nations resolutions on Palestine and the Middle East.

In a resolution adopted yesterday by a recorded vote of 140 in favour to 2 against (Israel and the United States), the Assembly also decided that a general meeting between the United Nations and the League of Arab States should take place once every two years, the next being in 1992, and requested the Secretary-General to encourage periodic consultations between the Secretariats of the two organizations.

In other action yesterday, the Assembly called for faithful implementation of the 1988 Geneva Agreements on Afghanistan and for all parties to search for a political solution on the basis of the principles contained in a statement by the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General's principles include the necessity of preserving the territorial integrity and Islamic character of the country, recognition of Afghans' right to determine their own form of Government, the need for a transition period, the necessity of ending arms supplies and the need for financial resources to aid in the country's reconstruction.

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A draft resolution calling for additional funds of $6.6 million for United Nations peace-making efforts in Afghanistan was approved yesterday by the General Assembly's Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary). By the text, the Secretary-General would continue and intensify his efforts for a comprehensive political settlement in Afghanistan. The draft was approved as the Committee continued its debate on the proposed programme budget for 1992-1993.

Explaining his country's position, Richard Kinchen of the United Kingdom said he strongly supported the efforts of the Secretary-General to bring peace to Afghanistan. However, at the same time, the Committee must recall that repeated concerns had been expressed regarding the level of justification given for proposed additional expenditures. Specifically, the rental and operation of the aircraft appeared disproportionate to the mission, he said.

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